

## **Appendix E – The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)**

The IDPH, Bureau of Nutrition and Physical Activity is the administrator of the Iowa WIC Program. The Department receives funding from the United States Department of Agriculture. IDPH monitors compliance of local programs per 641 Iowa Administrative Code Chapter 73 found at <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/iac/chapter/09-11-2019.641.73.pdf>, WIC Federal Regulations in 7 CFR Part 246 found at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2018-title7-vol4/pdf/CFR-2018-title7-vol4-part246.pdf>, and the Iowa WIC Program Policy and Procedure Manuals. The mission of the Iowa WIC Program is to provide and maintain the health and well-being of nutritionally at-risk women, infants and young children. The program provides nutritious food, nutrition and health education, breastfeeding promotion and support and access to health care for eligible individuals found to be at nutritional and/or medical risk. Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum, infants and children up to age five who reside in Iowa and meet income guidelines are eligible for WIC services. The WIC program is designed to help assure normal growth, increase immunization rates, and improve access to health care.

Currently, WIC services are provided to approximately 58,000 participants per month through a network of contract agencies and clinic sites statewide. Supplemental foods are provided to participants in the form of WIC food instruments issued by the local agency. WIC participants redeem food instruments through approximately 570 retail food and special purpose vendors under contract with the Iowa WIC program.

The WIC Program requires various professional staff dependent on the tasks assigned to the position. Staff working in WIC must have appropriate credentials and license requirements when required and be adequately trained in order to perform specific WIC functions as required by WIC policy.

WIC agency must have staff that can create and schedule appointments, collect eligibility requirements from WIC applicants, determine a WIC applicant's eligibility, complete blood work (hemoglobin screenings), complete anthropometric measurements, complete a nutrition/health assessment, create food packages, issue benefits, provide referrals, complete quality improvement and assurance activities, complete outreach activities, complete nutrition and breastfeeding action plans, complete all personnel functions as described in WIC Policy, and complete any other activities as required by IDPH.

Personnel with specific qualifications or credentials must perform tasks required for certifying participants and providing program benefits. These requirements may be due to:

- Scopes of practice that set limits,
- Mandatory licensing acts; or
- Policy decisions made by the Iowa WIC Program.

WIC agencies are obligated to provide all peer services and perform all WIC breastfeeding peer counselor program tasks. This includes meeting the minimum qualifications and requirements for WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor and WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator. The Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Coordinator must be a registered nurse or a licensed dietitian. The required time devoted to Peer Counseling supervision activities by the breastfeeding peer counselor coordinator position is 0.05 FTE per each peer counselor supervised.

Participants who are high-risk must be scheduled for at least one individual education contact by a licensed dietitian during a certification period and must have a nutrition care plan. If the licensed dietitian certifies the high-risk participant and writes the nutrition care plan, the dietitian should determine the appropriate level of service for the second education contact (licensed dietitian or another Competent Professional Authority (CPA)).

Per WIC Policy, the overall needs of the nutrition component of the Iowa WIC Program are best served by licensed dietitians. It is imperative that adequate licensed dietitian personnel are available to maintain the nutrition integrity of the program.

A WIC Competent Professional Authority (CPA) prescribes a federally defined package of supplemental food that addresses specific health and nutrient needs of an individual. Through a Value Enhanced Nutrition Assessment (VENA), nutrition counseling is provided to address immediate risks as well as long term goals as identified by the CPA and participant. Assessments and education must be completed using the participant centered approach. The participant centered approach involves engaging the participant in the assessment process through talk, information exchange, listening, and feedback. This type of interaction helps build rapport, improves the quality of information the participant is provided, and allows feedback to flow smoothly between the CPA and the participant.

WIC agencies are required to provide, but is not limited to participant eligibility determinations and certifications, nutrition education and counseling, breastfeeding promotion and support, WIC supplemental food instrument distribution, Farmers Market coupon distribution, quality improvement and assurance activities, outreach activities, and referrals to other health and social service programs.

Another component of the WIC program is the WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program. The intent of the WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program is to increase breastfeeding initiation and duration rates by providing support to pregnant and breastfeeding WIC participants. Through this program, WIC participants have access to a WIC breastfeeding peer counselor during their pregnancy and throughout their breastfeeding experience and are provided with breastfeeding education and basic breastfeeding support. Among other requirements, agencies administering this program must provide appropriate training and hire and compensate breastfeeding peer counselors.

The full program file for the WIC Program can be found at  
<https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/91/Annual%20Reports/IDPH%20Annual%20Report%202020.pdf>